(c) The balance share would be released after schemes sent by the State Government are sanctioned, subject to the availability of funds.

Non-Lifting of Cargo from Major Ports

721. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is fact that in most of the major ports in the country cargo has piled up due to non-lifting of the same which is causing problems for the cargo handling at the ports;

(b) if so, the details thereof port-wise as on date and quantity of cargo in each port which has not been lifted for more than two months; and

(c) the remedial measures proposed to be taken to decongest the major ports from accumulated cargo?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (DR. DEBENDRA PRADHAN): (a) and (b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise. However, the major port trusts have been taking action to dispose off the unclaimed & uncleared cargo after expiry of 60 days as per the provisions of Major Port Trust Act, 1963.

Expansion of Highways in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Assam

722. SHRI SHIV CHARAN SINGH: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state: the details of steps taken/contemplated by Government for improvement and expansion of National Highways passing through Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Assam?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (DR. DEBENDRA PRADHAN): The improvement of existing National Highways and declaration of new roads as National Highways, is a continuous process depending on the availability of funds. During the year 1997-98 funds for development to the tune of Rs. 25.50 crores, Rs. 17.00 crores and Rs. 18.21 crores were allocated to the States of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Assam respectively. Also 170 Kms, 434 Kms and 66 Kms have been declared as new National Highways during the year 1997-98 for these States. As the Budget for the year 1998-99 is yet to be approved by the Parliament, the programme for development cannot be decided.

Pathkar on four lane highways

723. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH SURYA: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have proposed to levy "Pathkar on four lane highways";

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) for which purpose the fund so collected would be utilized?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (DR. DEBENDRA PRADHAN): (a) and (b) Yes Sir. The Government has decided to levy user fee on four lane highways as follows:

Type of Vehicle	Rs./Km.
(i) Car/Jeep/Van	0.40
(ii) LCV	0.70
(iii) Truck/Buses	1.40
(iv) Heavy construction machinery & earth moving equipment	3.00

(c) Funds so collected will be utilised for maintenance and development of National Highways.

Implementation of "Rest Areas" concept in Andhra Pradesh

724. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether National Highways Authority of India has totally ignored the concept of "Rest Areas" in various road development programmes in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, what are the reasons for neglecting this concept;

(c) steps proposed to develop "Rest Areas";

(d) whether any specific representation has been received to develop "Rest Areas" in West Godavari District in Andhra Pradesh;

(e) if so, full details of the representation and background; and

(f) whether steps are being taken to implement this suggestion of Rest Areas in Andhra Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (DR. DEBENDRA PRADHAN): (a) and (b) The concept of "Rest Areas" was not included in the national highway work in Andhra Pradesh handles by the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI). However, certain traffic amenities, such as lay-bye, service road are already forming part of the project.

(c) The Government of Andhra Pradesh has earmarked a sum of Rs. 5 lakhs for construction of rest areas along National Highway-5 in West Godavari District.

(d) and (e) Yes, Sir.

In his representation dated the 19th May, 1998, Dr. P. Pullarao, Member, National Road Safety Council, has stressed the need for creating wayside amenities on National Highway-5 in West Godavari District. He has been representing for creation of model rest areas in West Godavari District since August 1996.

(f) NHAI is co-ordinating with the District Administration in identifying suitable places for providing rest areas.

Development of Minor Ports in Maharashtra

725. SHRI RAJ NATH SINGH:
PROF. RAM KAPSE:

Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central Government have received a proposal from Maharashtra Government for grant of financial assistance for development of minor ports in Maharashtra;

(b) if so, the present status of the proposal;

(c) the decision taken by Government on the proposal; and

(d) if no decision has since been taken, by when the same is likely to be taken?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANPORT (DR. DEBENDRA PRADHAN): (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. The proposal received from the Government of Maharashtra was incomplete and therefore, could not be accepted.

Improvement of National Highways in Karnataka

726. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to improve national highways passing through Karnataka; and

(b) if so, the details of the money to be spent for their improvement during the current year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (DR. DEBENDRA PRADHAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The development of National Highways is a continuous process and depends on allocation of funds, which for the year 1998-99 will be decided after Demands for Grants are passed the Parliament.